

Today, U.S. Representative Mike Quigley (IL-05) gave the following statement during a House Oversight and Government Reform Committee hearing in which the Committee considered holding the Attorney General, Eric Holder, in contempt over information related to Operation Fast and Furious:

Rep. Mike Quigley: "Thank you Mr. Chairman, I understand you want to know, and it's fair to ask these questions. But it's also fair to question motivations when we're doing something of historical precedents like this. You're curious, but your curiosity seems to end prior to the beginning of the Obama administration, which is curious to me. These are fair questions that should have been brought out before this committee. Let's have the former Attorney General here, the head of the ATF, and ask those questions. This isn't a small thing you're doing here where you may be angry and you want this, this is something this country has never done. So it's fair to ask what happened prior to this. Who knew what under previous administrations, was anyone else killed or injured? Where are those guns now that took place under previous administrations? And that doesn't bring back anyone, but at least lets us know you have reasons for doing this, or at least sort out truth and what we care about here.

Second, Wide Receiver and Fast and Furious, it can't be understated, both operations were wildly misguided, independent investigations must continue and have to. Those responsible must be held accountable, but today's vote has nothing to do with those investigations. Agent Terry's tragic death deserves justice and accountability, but this vote has nothing to do with that process. Worse yet, these actions redefine hypocrisy. Because in the end, if gun walking is about safety of agents and people who lives on both sides of the border, well then it's about gun safety and I'll meet you any time and talk about that.

If we're concerned about our agents and people on both sides let's remember a few salient facts. In Arizona, today, you can buy as many AK47s as you want. Not handguns or guns needed to go hunting, or to protect your home or business. You can buy as many AK47s as you want and pass them on to the cartels through straw purchases, as occurs thousands of times a year, putting agents and residents at risk. We know this, it's documented. The vast majority of

guns being used by the cartels come from the United States. The punishment for such transactions, straw purchases, was described here by an agent as equivalent to a moving violation.

We have two types of gun walking, both of them horribly wrong and dangerous. About 2,000 I believe you said occurred under this Fast and Furious and Wide Receiver, it led to an extraordinary tragedy that should never be repeated again. But let's just keep perspective, we're talking about hundreds of thousands of guns, AK47s, which from today on, it you don't want this to be repeated, are happening now as we speak.

In addition, in many states there's a gun show loophole. People can buy any type of gun they want, as many guns they want, without any kind of background check. Despite the fact that the vast majority of Americans and NRA members think that everyone should have a background check. So you can have dangerous people who have been adjudicated dangerously mentally ill, felons, terrorists, buy whatever they want. And including, especially, people who use those guns and make 100% profit selling them through straw purchasers to the cartels. What's especially troubling is you all have fought attempts to end that process.

If this is about Agent Terry, if this is about safety, and defending their honor and preventing this from ever happening again, hundreds of thousands that have already taken place, hundreds of thousands that will continue to take place, putting those people at risk, let's have some perspective here. It's fair when we bring up to recognize that, what's our motivation today? There can't be anything worse that they've done than this Fast and Furious and Wide Receiver, and we need to get to the bottom of it I get that. But don't try to make the point that you're out there to protect the agents' safety if the vast numbers are on the other side that are continuing to go on and we do nothing to do this.

Someone mentioned we need the guts to the right thing, well we need to have guts, and I hope we have it, to do the right thing. In Chicago, a young man on his way home from school a couple years ago, stepped in front of a bullet to protect his friend, he had more guts than we do."

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